Department has already provided Post Offices in 113573 Gram Panchayat Villages. Of the remaining Gram Panchayat villages yet to be provided Post Offices/PSSKs, only approximately 5105 Gram Panchayat villages/Gram Panchayat Headquarter villages fulfil at least distance and population norms. The Department has a target for opening 1000 Extra Departmental Branch Post Offices and 5000 Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Kendras during the Tenth Five Year Plan period.

Rise of privacy concerns by cell phone location services

426. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that cell phone location services raise privacy concerns as the cell phone acts a tracker to monitor the movement of the user;

(b) what are the Indian laws *vis-a-vis* Federal laws on the protection from the outrageous acts of the cell phone location service; and

(c) what amendments in the Indian laws are contemplated to ensure complete protection user privacy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) and (b) Sir, under the 'Cell phone location services' being provided by some of the Service Providers at present, the location of nearest base station to which the subscriber is linked at the given point of time may be displayed on the handset of the subscriber for his information. This service is not acting as a tracker to monitor the exact location or movement of subscriber. The service is useful to the subscriber as in case of emergency, when the subscriber is in an unknown area, he can get help from Police, Ambulance or Chemist etc. with the aid of location based services.

The Licences for providing Cellular Mobile Telephone Service (CMTS) in the country have been granted under section 4 of the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885. The terms and conditions of the said Licence adequately ensure the privacy of a CMTS subscriber and provide that only authorized Government agencies are permitted to monitor the telecommunication traffic.

(c) Does not arise in view of (a) and (b) above.